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## A morphological-poetic approach to Hemingway's "Up in Michigan"

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A MORPHOLOGICAL-POETIC APPROACH TO HEMINGWAY'S

"UP IN MICHIGAN"

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An Essay

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

University of the Pacific

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In Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Arts

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by

George Robert Cripe

May 11, 1973

This essay, written and submitted by

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is approved for recommendation to the  
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Hemingway's first short story, "Up in Michigan,"<sup>1</sup> portrays the growth and destruction of a young girl's romantic illusions about love through her infatuation with and seduction by an apparently gentle man who is really an insensitive brute. Hemingway explores this typically anti-romantic theme in what appears at first glance to be straightforward journalistic style. But the prose, like almost everything else in this story, is deceptive, for lurking beneath the flat surface of its denotative diction and simple syntax lie linguistic strategies and dynamically charged meanings through whose interplay the real disillusioning world of the story emerges. In thus concealing the inward psychological phenomena of disillusionment within linguistic substructures which only release their meaning when seen as poetic forces playing against each other beneath the narrative level, Hemingway forces "form" to express the theme that appearance is deceptive.<sup>2</sup>

Gunther Muller's definition of "form" as a "progression of unified metamorphoses"<sup>3</sup> serves as a revelatory critical approach in Hemingway explication,<sup>4</sup> as its application to "Up in Michigan" will demonstrate. What matters in true poetry, says Muller, is not the asserted propositions, their correctness or validity, but the creation of images whose interplay permits the "world" of the poem to emerge. This world consists of the timeless and placeless harmony of many dynamically charged meanings. The individual meaning of a structure possesses poetic life only in the fabric of the whole. Poetry delivers its message by language-formed images. The interaction of meanings conveyed by words, images and sentences is a process called "forming." Muller sees the poem as a living intellectual organism which grows and changes in very much the

same manner as a plant does<sup>5</sup> until it reaches a point of stasis or consummation where no further change is possible. But in the process of "becoming," the poetic-creative natural force manifests itself in the genesis of the linguistic structure as "metamorphosis" or change brought about by the interplay of parts and forces caused by the flow of language. These metamorphoses occur in progression, and when complete they form a unity. Thus the form of any truly poetic work is a progression of unified metamorphoses. Muller identifies some of the linguistic strategies by which these metamorphoses come to light as rhythm of sounds, concepts, ideas, images, events and characters.

"Up in Michigan," read as a "poem" in Muller's morphological sense, yields a rich harvest of meanings not apparent at first glance.<sup>6</sup> A close examination of the semantic structure emerging from the language body reveals process of disillusionment "forming." Through odd juxtapositions of words and manipulation of syntax the imaginative ideals of the adolescent girl, Liz, merge with and are transformed by the realities of physical sexuality. The story employs the formal elements of morphological linking, symbolic landscape, and disjunctive analogy as elements in the progression of unified metamorphoses which reveal the growth and shattering of Liz's romantic dream of love which occurs in a world that is basically deceptive, violent and cruel.

Liz's mental and physical impressions form the central concern of the story. Except for one brief moment when the point of view shifts to Jim when he is drinking whiskey, and the barrenness of his mental world penetrates the richly imaginative world of Liz, the activities of the other characters come to us mediated through her consciousness. The first metamorphosis occurs in a careful linking of verbs which reveal, rather

than describe, Liz's mental state in the process of undergoing change. The verbs are all related, but are so linked and transformed that they signal intensification of imaginative feeling--a kind of self-seduction. At first, as I shall show, a cluster of the verb "like" indicates the superficiality of her fondness for Jim. As she becomes more involved in her fantasy, "like" changes to "think about." Finally she "let herself go," and thus completely loses touch with reality. She has completed an emotional arc from attraction to him through penetration of her consciousness by Jim, to a climactic release of her rationality. This thought sequence foreshadows the physical sequence which is to follow.

Verbal tension carries the burden of the paradoxical nature of her attitude toward her approaching disillusionment, which is both frightening and necessary. This tension occurs between the verbs "frighten" and "want;" as the sexual act which produces disillusionment approaches, the verb "be afraid" carries the burden of her apprehension, but as the conflict between desire and fear intensifies, juxtaposition of the verbs "frightened" and "wanted" dramatize her inward tension. When this conflict is resolved by seduction, a cluster of verbs denoting physical pain--"hurt"--lends psychological weight to the painfulness of her disillusionment. Finally, her constructive efforts to recapture her romantic dream and to conceal the sordid reality of a drunken Jim which had killed her illusion are discovered through the verbs "covered" and "tucked."

These four instances of morphological linking illustrate a progression of unified metamorphoses which produces thematic resonance. A close look at them will show how linguistic strategy is constantly "forming" meaning.

The growth of Liz's romantic illusion is both bodied forth and

elevated to symbolic significance by the expanding cluster of the verb "like" which occurs in this passage at the beginning of the story. Coming after Jim's cursory notice of Liz's physical attributes, Liz's sensitivity and expansive imagination emphasize the difference in their emotional worlds.<sup>6</sup>

Liz liked Jim very much. She liked it the way he walked over from the shop and often went to the kitchen door to watch for him to start down the road. She liked it about his mustache. She liked it about how white his teeth were when he smiled. She liked it very much that he didn't look like a blacksmith. She liked it how much D. J. Smith and Mrs. Smith liked Jim. One day she found that she liked it the way the hair was black on his arms and how white they were above the tanned line when he washed up in the washbasin outside the house. Liking that made her feel funny.

The repetition of the phrase "she liked it" produces a linguistic expansion that parallels Liz's expanding and growing emotion while simultaneously underlining, through the use of the impersonal pronoun, the unreal quality of her emotion. She is in love with the idea of love, the "it." There are, however, two important variations in this syntactic pattern, and they both sound a warning of the danger to this romantic emotion that lies ahead. She liked it very much that he didn't look like a blacksmith." The intensification of emotion produced by the qualifiers "very much," attached to a fact that is patently false, serves to underline the danger in Liz's mental condition, and foreshadows the deeper deception into which her love will carry her. The second variation in this "she liked it" pattern introduces a new and strange sensation which occurs in juxtaposition with a change in the verb form from past tense to gerundive. "One day she found that she liked it the way the hair was black on his arms and how white they were above the tanned line . . . Liking that made her feel funny." This transformation is charged with important submerged meaning. The alteration in syntax accompanying her attraction to the white hairs above the tanned line

on his arm signals both a particularization of her attention to the more intimate parts of his body (the change from "the hair was black" to "how white they were") and another intensification of emotion coupled with awakening awareness ("how white they were" and "she found that she liked it"). "Liking that made her feel funny." What happens in this last sentence is that emotion progresses from a momentary sensation ("liked") to a permanent state of feeling ("liking"). The idea of compulsion emerges from the tone of the verb "made," and the result of this mental violation of Liz's emotional life by the idea of Jim's sexuality is to cause her to "feel funny." This forceful awakening of her sexual feeling again produces a tension in her that becomes more explicit later when Jim physically seduces her. But the process of seduction has already taken place through the manipulation of the linguistic patterns. In short, by the time the end of the passage is reached the meaning of "liked it" has undergone a metamorphosis from "superficial attraction" to "desire" to "cohabit." The whole inward movement of the story from the impersonal abstract quality of romantic love to the devastating force of "liking" life in a sexual encounter is contained here.

The tonal pattern of the linked verbs increases in complexity as a subtle shift from "like" to "thought about" signals the absorption of Liz's intellectual nature in what has up to this point been only a deepening emotional involvement. "All this time now Liz was thinking about Jim Gilmore." "Liking" merges into "thinking about," a mutation that signals the subversion of her reason by her imagination. That this trend toward total involvement of her personality has taken firm hold upon her will, as well as her reason, becomes established through the metamorphosis of "thinking" into "wanted." "Liz wanted to make something



special for Jim to take." The sexual connotations could hardly be more explicit. Liz's total personality---emotion, intellect, and will---now drives toward the goal of making something special for Jim to "take." Jim will take it, but she will "make" it; in other words when Jim does seduce her it will be because of this process of self-seduction by which she has prepared herself for the taking. The three-fold progression of her seduction through emotion, intellect, and will, is mirrored by the linking and progression of various forms of the verb "like," "think," and "want."

As Muller points out, the propositional content of the narrative statements is less significant in revealing the true meaning of the "poem" than is a creative analysis of the tonal play of linguistic forces within the structure of the living work. The play of sexual force upon the naive romantic sensibility of this young girl which is released through an analysis of linked and metamorphosed verbs coupled with syntactic manipulation for symbolic effect transcends any paraphrasable narrative content. This kind of structural stress, growth, and unity constitutes the "forming" or "becoming" presence of the "poetic-creative natural force."

The poetic forming of Liz's disillusionment through morphological linking continues as "thinking" becomes linked with "dreaming," a juxtaposition that emphasizes her growing alienation from reality. Her day dreams become merged with her night dreams through the linking of "sleep" and "thinking" in the phrase, "She couldn't sleep well from thinking about him." At this point a new verbal mutation appears, "discover," which is linked with "thinking." "She discovered it was fun to think about him too." This phrase constitutes another important

plateau in the linguistic landscape of the story, for the diction picks up and intensifies in imagination her earlier discovery, through sense perception of the hairs on Jim's arms, that liking Jim's masculinity made her "feel funny." Just how far she has progressed into the imaginative act of copulation can be judged from the intensification and progression of the diction and syntax in this daydreaming over that in the "real" observation. Then she "found," now she "discovers." The word "discovers" has important overtones for the future when Jim in actuality "discovers" or "uncovers" her. But she appears here again as the agent of her own seduction by imaginatively "discovering" herself in her dream of Jim. "Tone" produces reverberations of meaning in a vertical sense, in the context of the whole piece, that go beyond denotative significance of the phrase or word. In the earlier experience also her attachment was superficial, impersonal, and only emotional ("liking that") in contrast to the deep involvement of her entire being with the person of her ideal lover ("to think about him"). Then, too, her emotion was new, equivocal, and involuntary ("made her feel funny"). Now, in her imagination, it is habitual, unequivocal, and voluntary ("it was fun").

The irony of her situation appears in the phrase "If she let herself go it was better." Here her impending sexual involvement is clearly foreshadowed by the verb "let . . . go." Later on she lets herself go in a physical sense, when "something clicked inside her." But the verbs picture not only her physical conquest by Jim but also the conquest of her rationality and will by her imagination. The structure pursues the dream-like quality of her consciousness at this point as well as her hopeless confusion of mind by a kind of linguistic probing culminating

in the statement that "it was all mixed up in a dream about not sleeping and really not sleeping." She is unable to distinguish between her dreams and reality; she is confused about her dream of romance and the reality of her sexuality. Only in her dream world is it better if she lets herself go. When the physical reality that she is moving toward in her imagination actually arrives, it will shatter her dream-world forever. Thus the theme that emerges from the linguistic structure of this passage is that dreams tend toward fulfillment in disillusioning experience. The irony here comes from the tension produced within the verb "let herself go" by forcing it to carry the romantic overtones of Liz's dream world while at the same time making it foreshadow the physical act which will destroy that illusion.

Liz's romance reaches its imaginative height during Jim's absence on the hunting trip. When he returns the world of imagination gradually begins to tilt back toward reality. Although the linguistic strategy now clearly signals a changed relationship between Jim and Liz, she does not immediately perceive this new alignment of personal forces because she is still living partially in her dream world. The linguistic phenomenon that signals this altered relationship between Jim and Liz is the appearance of dialogue. For the first time in the story Jim speaks to Liz. The bridge from Jim's physical world to Liz's ideal one is built with audible words. Contact has been made between them. This contact is intensified through thematic equivalency of disparate meanings by tonal and syntactic proximity. By the device of juxtaposition of the two statements, "Mrs. Smith kissed D. J. and he hugged her," and "Jim said, 'Hello, Liz,' and grinned," Jim's verbal greeting gathers up the thematic significance of the Smiths' physical embrace. Irony heightens

the new reality: "Liz hadn't know what would happen when Jim got back but she was sure it would be something. Nothing had happened." Actually, of course, everything had "happened." In her confusion about dreams and reality, Liz misinterprets the facts. From now on the action moves out of the realm of "thinking" to "happening."

Imagination merges more firmly with physical action in the erotic diction of the following sentences describing events after dinner: "She was thinking about him hard and then Jim came out," and "she could feel him breathing and then he put his arms around her . . . but she thought 'he's come to me finally. He's really come.'" This is the first time Liz has ever thought about Jim "hard." There is more than a suggestion here that Liz's thought is taking on a material quality; in fact hovering in this dream state is her physical ravishment, as the erotic connotations of words and phrases indicate. Somehow, however, the shift from thought to action must occur in the same manner that the imaginative world appeared, through morphological linking, if the progression of metamorphoses is to continue its organic development and remain unified. The syntax accomplishes this modulation by combining the verb "think" with actual physical contact by Jim; then the transition is complete. Liz doesn't "think" any more. The prose picks up new verbs, "frightened," "wanted," and "hurt," but the old verbs describing her imagination do not reappear. They vanish, along with her innocence.

The remainder of the story portrays the destruction of Liz's romantic idealism and her attempt to reconstruct her dream. One of the themes, as Liz moves out of romanticism into realism, is the conflict between her fear of sexual passion and her increasing desire for it. Another theme is that of the physical and mental pain that accompanies

her disillusionment. The poetic-creative force, pulsing through the flow of language, forces syntax and diction to form a rapid series of metamorphoses as romance yields to pain, causing disillusionment which rapidly moves toward nihilism. The final resolution occurs when romanticism opposes nihilism and results in a realistic synthesis. At this point the story ends because no further metamorphosis is possible.

Language strategy employs both syntax and diction to reveal Liz's psychological processes as her desire for sexual experience battles successfully against her fear. The diminishing force of the adverbs modifying "frightened" until they finally disappear altogether mirrors Liz's withdrawal from fear. When Jim first put his arms around her "Liz was terribly frightened, no one had ever touched her, but she thought, 'He's really come.'" The next time "frightened" occurs "terribly" has diminished to "so": "She held herself stiff because she was so frightened and did not know anything else to do." The next "frightened" stands alone: "She was frightened." When Jim becomes more aggressive, fear reasserts some of its former strength, and the diction faithfully reflects this movement of her mind: "She was very frightened and didn't know how he was going to go about things, but she smuggled close to him." Not only do the weakening adverbs telegraph her lessening fear, but the clauses following the verb "fear" indicate another psychological progression--from paralyzed thought, through contemplated action on Liz's part, to a shifting of fear and responsibility from herself to Jim. First "she thought," then "she did not know anything else to do," finally "she did not know how he was going to go about things, but she smuggled closer." This physical action, "smuggled closer," again bridges the gap between thought and act and symbolizes the psychological surrender

that preceded it. Syntax too is constantly "forming." Fear diminishes, and desire gains the ascendancy, as the syntax of the following two sentences, juxtaposed, discovers: "She was frightened, but she wanted it. She had to have it, but it frightened her." By intensifying the form of her desire and inverting the syntax of the second sentence so that "She had to have it" is promoted from second to first clause, the natural linguistic force reveals the final overcoming of fear by desire. The transformation in the syntax of she and it pronouns reinforces this movement.

From the moment that Jim first touches her to the moment of her physical ravishment and Jim's subsequent drunken stupor, Liz experiences an intensification of pain. This increasing physical and mental pain finds linguistic form in a cluster of words which expresses variations on the theme of hurting. When Jim kissed her, for example, "It was such a sharp, aching, hurting feeling." The physical consummation was painful: "It hurts so." Her greatest pain came when she realized that Jim was drunk: "He had hurt her." But this hurt carries a double meaning. Not only had the act of intercourse been painful physically, but the sudden realization that Jim had not shared in her romantic illusion caused her mental suffering. Liz had been lying on the hard, splintery, cold planks of the dock just as the "beauty" of a buck Jim had killed lay cold and stiff in the back of the wagon. The realization that she meant no more to him than a hunting trophy "killed" her emotionally.

All disillusionment is painful, but it must come; and the language strategy of this story employs various devices to underline this large central theme. The psychological to physical to psycho-physical movement of the disillusioning experience can be observed in the previous analysis

of diction and syntax. First Liz's dream world expands until her romantic illusion conquers her total personality. Then the movement toward disillusionment begins as Liz moves outward away from fear of physical penetration, to overwhelming desire for it, to painful experience of it. Finally the movement is inward again as Liz's physical pain is transmuted into mental anguish for her lost innocence. The pain, however, does not become totally inward, because it manifests itself physically, "She was crying." From now on her task will be to maintain some kind of equilibrium between total disillusionment brought about by brute fact in a physical universe and total illusion of an ideal world. Liz must achieve the realistic compromise that life demands.

The inevitability of Liz's encounter with Jim and her cooperation in her own seduction has already been alluded to. Jim underlines the inevitability of their action by dialogue in which he speaks of his compulsion and then modifies his statement to include Liz's participation in the pre-determined act: "I got to. I'm going to. You know we got to." In spite of all her protestations that he mustn't and that it isn't right, her previous thoughts and actions confirm the truth of Jim's statement of naturalistic determinism. This act in all of its physical and metaphorical inevitability and painfulness is bigger than both of them, as Liz's cry, "Oh, it's so big and it hurts so," reveals. Here at the crucial moment of consummation, dialogue conveys the larger meaning of their physical intimacy, just as earlier when Jim first spoke to Liz after returning from the hunt, dialogue served as the thematic equivalent of a physical embrace.

Liz's new existential peril emerges from a linguistic matrix which contains juxtaposition of sentences describing both her physical act,

walking to the edge of the dock to look down into the water, and the state of emotional emptiness to which this act corresponds. The diction and syntax also assume definite symbolic shape. "She walked over to the edge of the dock and looked down to the water." Her pain brings her to the edge of the dock, just as her psychic pain has brought her to the edge of despair, and she looks into the nihilistic force of nature, symbolized by the water. For Hemingway, as for many existentialists,<sup>8</sup> the forces of nihilism are not simply passive, but actively destructive, hence the "mist" is represented as "coming up from the bay." Liz has experienced the nadir of life, complete disillusionment: "She was cold and miserable and everything felt gone." She has gone as low as she can go without plunging into the water, the destructive element.

Having progressed from romanticism to disillusionment through a series of morphological linkings and syntactic manipulations, the poetic creative force achieves final metamorphosis through a series of symbolic acts by which Liz achieves existential synthesis of the physical and ideal worlds. From her nadir of despair Liz turns her back on the water and begins to try to reconstruct her ideal world of romantic love. "She walked back to Jim." She is returning to the world of life and effort. She speaks to Jim, tries to awaken that which had died. Failing this, she covers him with her coat--the first step toward recovering her illusion. She symbolically conceals the harsh reality of the situation with her own feminine idealism. Then she tucks him in--a recurrence of an earlier domestic theme. Finally she walks back up the road, to return to her bed and to her world of imaginative dreams. But a "cold mist" is rising from the bay. The nihilistic force, not having been able to completely destroy her, will at least continue to pursue her, reminding



her that her compromise is an unstable one. Her romantic illusion will be permanently and continuously altered and threatened by the mist from the bay. She may mend her world, but pain and disillusionment must now color it with harsh tones. Lost innocence cannot be regained.

The symbolism of this final scene has a counterpoint interpretation which is so obvious that it must not be omitted. Jim, or brute fact, has altered Liz's world, but she has not exactly left his world untouched either. Jim lying dead drunk on the hard planks of the dock after intercourse with Liz, Liz lifting his head and shaking it, Liz kissing him tenderly on the cheek, and Liz possessively covering him with her coat wake images of the big buck lying dead on the hard boards of the wagon, covered with the hunter's burlap. Liz, the hunter, has bagged her quarry, and Jim will have to achieve his own existential compromise with Liz's domesticating and shaping idealism. This kind of symbolic ambiguity exemplifies the interplay of parts and forces caused by the flow of language which Gunther Muller calls "forming," and which is evidence that the creative natural force is present in the linguistic structure.

The ambiguity referred to above heightens the focus of the story, through contrast, on the main theme: the destruction of romantic illusion. Hemingway also supports and enhances the disillusionment theme by using the formal device of repetition to convey an atmosphere of deception throughout the story. Nothing is as it seems in Liz's world. Jim's appearance is deceptive, "He did not look like a blacksmith." The post-office, the center of communication, has a "high false front." The boats on the lake "didn't seem to be moving at all," but they disappeared when Liz stopped looking at them. Jim was deceptive in his

attitude toward Liz. "He didn't seem to notice her much." But he obviously noticed her a great deal. After the hunt, having drunk the whiskey, the men were "feeling hilarious, but acting very respectable." Everyone and everything in this story gives a false appearance. Even Liz was "pretending to read a book, but thinking about Jim." Jim tells Liz to "come on for a walk," but he has something more than a walk in mind. This progression of unified metamorphoses gives to the very texture of the story a feeling of falseness, an atmosphere of deception, which provides resonance for the sounding of the central theme of disillusionment.

Symbolic landscape re-inforces, on yet another level, the deceptiveness of appearances by showing that the naturalistic force of sex lurks just under the surface of civilized morality. A close examination of Hemingway's description of the town and terrain reveals a consistent symbolism. The post office has a false front; communication cannot be trusted. The five houses are in a big grove of elm trees; elms and groves are both traditional symbols of sexual license and passion, and their presence in the town indicates that "respectable" men and women live in the midst of naturalistic sexual passion. Three times Hemingway mentions that the road is sandy; twice he mentions that it is steep, and that it runs down the hill, through the timber, another phallic symbol, to the bay which is the active nihilistic force.<sup>9</sup> This steep sandy road is the one that Jim and Liz take down to the dock that night when Liz loses her innocence. Since the church, or moral rectitude, is "up" the road, and the school, or secular knowledge, is "down," it seems obvious that this steep sandy road represents the path of life. Uncertain and shifting underfoot, it carries Liz and Jim away from church, downward

through the grove via the school to the bay. Facing the school is the blacksmith shop, painted a symbolically sensual red. Far from being the peaceful landscape it appears at first glance, this landscape is charged with symbols of eros, power, and nihilism. The emotional symbolism underlying what appears to be an unusually objective, detailed description of the physical setting sets in motion an undercurrent of falseness which pulls Liz's ideal world under its denotative surface.

A more subtle kind of linguistic forming can be observed through analysis of certain kinds of imagery which seem to be linked analogically with disparate objects or actions elsewhere in the story. This "disjunctive analogy" links Jim's hunting and fishing activities to sexual conquest and violence: "In the evenings he read The Toledo Blade and the Grand Rapids paper by the lamp in the front room or went out spearing fish in the bay with a jacklight with D. J. Smith." What really is being revealed about Jim here is the murderous egotistical nature of his night-time activities. "Spearing fish in the bay," in the light of what Jim later does, becomes a disjunctive analogy to "seducing Liz on the dock." The newspaper, Jim's source of intellectual nourishment, fittingly is called the Toledo Blade. Likewise when Jim pulls the burlap sacks of the deer in the wagon what he is really doing, by analogy, is pulling the dress off Liz. The dead deer lying on the boards of the wagon, as has already been mentioned, becomes by analogy both Liz lying on the hard boards of the dock, covered by Jim, her romance killed, and Jim lying stiff and cold on the boards of the dock, covered by Liz's coat, a trophy of her "hunting skill." The most elaborate analogy occurs just before the hunters leave: "Liz wanted to make something special for Jim to take but she didn't finally because she was afraid to ask Mrs. Smith for the eggs"

and flour and afraid if she bought them Mrs. Smith would catch her cooking. It would have been all right with Mrs. Smith but Liz was afraid." The three occurrences of "afraid" together with "wanted," "to make," and "for Jim to take" link this passage metaphorically and by analogy to Liz's struggle with fear of and desire for sexual experience with Jim. What Liz, by analogy, really wanted was for Jim to "take" her. But this experience would involve a kind of preparation of herself on the subject of sex---the reference to "eggs and flour" could hardly be more explicit---which Mrs. Smith, the "mother" and married woman could have provided. Liz's fear of Mrs. Smith's suspicion keeps her, ironically, from asking for knowledge which that tolerant lady would willingly have given her, but it is not strong enough to keep her from receiving that carnal knowledge from Jim in painful experience for which she was consequently unprepared. The potential meaning of the whole story lies folded in this analogy waiting for the creative force to form the various linguistic structures which will open it out into fullness.

After the men return from the hunting trip a disjunctive analogy appears which, because of the unique point of view it introduces, symbolizes the anti-romantic consciousness which penetrates and destroys Liz's romantic sensibility: "Jim took a long pull on his way back to the house. . . .It was hard to lift such a big jug up to drink out of it. Some of the whiskey ran down on his shirt front."<sup>10</sup> The spilled whiskey becomes an analogy here for the objectification of Jim's thoughts in action. For after Jim spills the whiskey on his shirt front, the point of view shifts so that momentarily we are inside his head experiencing his perception of phenomena: "Jim began to feel great. He loved the taste and feel of whiskey. He was glad to be back to a comfortable bed and warm food and the shop. He had another drink." It is a meager world compared to Liz's

richly imaginative one. She does not exist as a person anywhere in Jim's world of objects and sensations. Later in the evening she will come into Jim's world briefly, but as an erotic object, not as a person. Earlier in the story Jim's consciousness regarding Liz had flickered momentarily into view: "Jim noticed that her hair was always neat behind. He liked her face because it was so jolly but he never thought about her." Jim is more than a physical male brute. His perceptions symbolize a world view that is empirical, naturalistic, deterministic, anti-romantic. People, in this view, exist as objects to be manipulated, but not as human beings with dignity and personality. This naturalistic world of brute force and primal urges penetrates Liz's world of ideal sentiment and love when Jim the "blacksmith" (even the name is ironic) pounds her on the dock. The whiskey spilled on Jim's shirt is the linguistic technique by which meaning--the theme of Jim's thoughts spilling over into external action, or the larger theme of raw fact and naturalistic determinism threatening idealism and romantic individualism with annihilation--becomes objectified by language-formed images.

"Up in Michigan," analyzed by Muller's principles of creative morphological criticism, discloses an intricate web of formal devices reacting with each other to achieve a richness of meaning that transcends the normal capabilities of logical syntax and which continues to expand and develop as long as "forming" continues. That the same morphological approach will work with other Hemingway short stories has already been demonstrated by Louis Leiter's article, referred to in a previous footnote, explicating "On the Quai at Smyrna." If Hemingway's prose has indeed been formed by the poetic-creative natural force which Muller and Coleridge contend is the "shaping" spirit inherent in true poetry,

not only his short stories, but his novels as well, should yield psychological and philosophical insights in response to morphological probing. Where the truly creative spirit does not inform the work, as is the case with many imitations of Hemingway, the progression of unified metamorphoses which is the proof of the creative spirit's presence simply would not appear. All that remains in such works after analysis are the dry husks of Hemingway-like journalistic prose which lesser minds have mistaken for the essential Hemingway style.

The implications of Muller's theory of morphological poetics as a critical approach to certain kinds of prose outside the Hemingway canon are promising. Eudora Welty's story "Powerhouse," for example, though at the opposite pole from Hemingway's stories in terms of action, utilizes the ordinary diction and "careless" syntax that seem to conceal deeper meanings within an organic pattern. Even Jane Austen's Emma contains clusters of verbs and nouns that seem to achieve the symbolic "forming" quality of Hemingway's realistic prose style. Perhaps a morphological look at other ironic naturalistic writers such as Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, or even Thomas Mann would disclose poetic gold in the prosaic ore.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Hemingway, "Up in Michigan," from The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Scribner's, 1938), pp. 81-86. All quotations are from this edition.

<sup>2</sup>"Up in Michigan" seems to have escaped extensive critical notice. The only commentaries I have seen are those of Harry Levin, "Observations on the Style of Ernest Hemingway," Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Hill and Way, 1961) pp. 93-115; Michael F. Moloney, "Ernest Hemingway: The Missing Third Dimension," Hemingway and His Critics, (New York: Hill and Way, 1961), pp. 180-191; R. W. Lewis, Hemingway on Love (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), pp. 4-5; Joseph De Falco, The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), p. 55; Carlos Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 135; Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), pp. 179-180. All of these authors mention the story only in passing. Levin attributes what he calls "the paradox of toughness and sensitivity" in Hemingway to the fact that he is a poet. Levin also traces the influence of Gertrude Stein on "Up in Michigan." Moloney finds a pre-conceived poetic pattern in Hemingway's "illiterate pose," points to omnipresent symbolism in Hemingway's prose as evidence of poetic consciousness of man's spiritual nature despite Hemingway's denials. Baker, De Falco, and Lewis see "Up in Michigan" as a symbolic if not allegorical affirmation of transcendent psychological or philosophical themes. For Baker the story is an example of the paradoxical "attraction-repulsion phenomenon that centers around male virility and which seems to be the axis around which the story of womankind revolves." De Falco considers it as a story about sexual initiation of an adolescent into the world of adulthood: "Once her girlish notions of romance are reduced to mere animal experience, she is cast adrift into the adult world of contingency." Lewis finds in the story an illustration of the triumph of agape love over eros: Her gesture of care in wrapping Jim in her coat gives us hope for survival in an unromantic world. Her gesture represents the kind of love that Hemingway's heroes often have: it is the agape that outlives the eros." Philip Young says that the story is about what life is like in our time: "Life in our century is violent, brutal, painful." All of these critics confirm my thesis that underneath the purged diction and elemental syntax of Hemingway's prose larger meanings are concealed.

<sup>3</sup>Gunter Muller, "Morphological Poetics," Reflections on Art, ed. S. K. Langer; (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 202-228.

<sup>4</sup>The only critic I have discovered who uses a morphological approach to explication of Hemingway is Louis Leiter, "Neural Projections in Hemingway's 'On the Quai at Smyrna,'" Studies in Short Fiction, 3, No. 2 (1968), 199-206. Leiter shows how structure and tone in this story express meaning through a seven-fold progression and intensification of the effects of war on a sensitive person. The intense horrors of war in the first three scenes forces what he calls a "reversal" in the final four episodes which protects the narrators' emotions from such neural bombardment. Understatement and irony, the dominant tones of the story work together with the structural reversal to protect the narrator's emotional receptors. I am indebted to Dr. Leiter for this critical analysis which is one of the works of criticism which sparked my own interest in this kind of an approach to Hemingway. He has taken a similar approach to another author in his

"A Reading of Isaac Babel's 'Crossing into Poland,'" Studies in Short Fiction, 3, No. 2 (1968), 199-206.

<sup>5</sup>Muller comes very close to Coleridge's conception of "organic form" which, he says, is "innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form." The poet, says Coleridge, directs "self-consciously, a power and an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness." (Italics mine). Quotation from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Mechanic and Organic Form," English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), p. 500. Both men share the view of Goethe that there is in nature a purposive creative force which manifests itself in various forms. Since poetry is a product of intellectual nature, it shares this vital purposive force; that is, in a sense a poem possesses a life of its own which conforms to laws of its own. The morphological critic must discover, through creative analysis, the poetic laws which operate in a particular work and which manifest themselves in "forming" through a progression of unified metamorphoses, the world of the poem. This is why, says Muller, it is futile to try to judge a work by any classic or objective standard. You cannot call a fish a failure because it is not a man.

<sup>6</sup>Notice, too, here the alternation of her consciousness between the very personal detail of his body and the more general and abstract observations of his appearance as a social being. First she notices how he walks, his mustache, his white teeth. Then she seems to pull back from this very personal, almost physical, "contact" with him and notices such things as his job and his social standing with the Smiths. But she is drawn irresistibly back to his body; she notices his hairy arms--the most intimate observation of all. This oscillation of attention between the personal and the social reflects the same conflict that is going on in the verbal tension.

<sup>7</sup>Hemingway, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>8</sup>Several commentators have mentioned Hemingway's connection with existentialism. John Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods (University of Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1960), makes the strongest and most recent case for the fact that Hemingway was an existentialist.

<sup>9</sup>In another Hemingway story, "Big Two-Hearted River," the swamp functions symbolically in the same way the road does here.

<sup>10</sup>The onanistic-narcissistic imagery here also reinforces Jim's inability to make love to a person.